(c) Different evaluation studies conducted to assess the impact of NWDPRA have concluded that, in the evaluated watersheds, there was general increase in ground water recharge, number of wells and water bodies, cropping intensity, yields of crops, reduction in soil losses and changes in cropping patterns. As regards the impact of DPAP, the evaluation studies show that there is general increase in productivity of land, water table level and availability of fuel wood and fodder.

(d) The National Agriculture Policy being followed in the Government of India since July, 2000 in respect of 'Flood and Drought Management' provides:

"In order to reduce risk in agriculture and impart greater resilience to Indian agriculture against droughts and floods, efforts will be made for achieving greater flood proofing of flood prone agriculture and drought proofing of rainfed agriculture for protecting the farmers from vagaries of nature. For this purpose, contengency agriculture planning, development of drought and flood resistant crop varieties, watershed development programmes, drought prone areas and desert development programmes and rural infrastructure development programmes will receive particular attention".

Task Force on micro irrigation

1605. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 65 given in Rajya Sabha on the 9th July, 2004 and state:

(a) Government's response to the report submitted by Task Force Committee on micro irrigation;

(b) what are the salient features of the report; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken for the encouragement of micro irrigation in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The Task Force on Micro Irrigation in its Report submitted to the Central Government has recommended for covering three million ha. under micro irrigation in the country during the Tenth Plan and another 14 million ha. during the Eleventh Plan. According

to the Task Force, this would require an investment of Rs. 10,500 crore during the Tenth Plan and another Rs. 51,000 crores during the Eleventh Plan. Other salient recommendations of the Task Force are as follows:

(i) The financial assistance to the farmers for microirrigation should be 50% of unit cost, out of which 40% share should be from Government of India and the balance 10% by the respective State Governments. The States may raise their share through Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) loan from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).

(ii) The funds need to be released through NABARD/lead banks.

(iii) There should be tax concessions to make the system affordable by the farmers.

(c) The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is presently implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Macro Management in Agriculture-Supplementation/Complementation of State Efforts through Work Plans under which, among other programmes, assistance is being given to the farmers for promoting drip irrigation and sprinkler irrigation in the country. With a view to give focused attention and for increasing the coverage of urea under microirrigation, it is proposed to launch a new Scheme to Microirrigation for implementation during the Xth Plan.

High yielding variety sugarcane

1606. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that scientists of Sugarcane Research Institute, Tamil Nadu, have developed a high yielding sugarcane variety suited well for problem soil and drought conditions; and

(b) if so, when it is expected to be declared officially for sugarcane growers in order to derive early benefits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Scientists of Sugarcane Research Station, Cuddalore of the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University have developed a high yielding sugarcane variety CoC (SC) 22, which is suitable for problem soils and withstands drought conditions.